



Seattle/King County Circular Plastic Film Recycling Stewardship Pilot Overview

Objective

To conduct a three-month pilot program delivering the requisite services to develop and test the effectiveness of a system for recycling post-consumer film packaging in Seattle and King County using a return-to-retail circular economy approach. The goal is to develop and implement a program, using best practices from this pilot, that could operate as a stand-alone voluntary program or as a complementary cost-effective program to any future multi-material stewardship or Extended Producer Responsibility program established in the United States.

Background

Grocery/retail stores use a substantial number of plastic bags, wraps and other film packaging to safely transport and protect products, both in the front and back of stores. These stores are facing increasing pressure to restrict use of this packaging. Primarily, due to low recycling rates and concerns over widespread marine litter. By participating in this stewardship pilot, grocers/retailers have an opportunity to provide a valuable customer service by collecting this film packaging for recycling. Retail film takeback programs can help reduce plastic waste generated in their communities and from many essential products carried in their stores.

The American Chemistry Council along with local government partners and industry allies have joined together to support a select number of retail collection programs for consumer film packaging in the Greater Seattle area. The goal is to optimize the use and effectiveness of these programs for recycling this material that is no longer accepted in curbside recycling.

Participating Retailers

- Marketime Foods
- Madrona Grocery Outlet
- Town & Country Market
- PCC Community Markets

Retail Collection Operational Plan:

Acceptable Items – The program will focus on polyethylene (PE) film products and packaging including plastic bags, overwrap and other film products or packaging.

Consumer Accessible Collection bins – Transparent collection bins for customer drop-off will be provided to retail participants and should be placed in a prominent location near the front entrance area of the retail store. The bins will include customer information and instruction to encourage collection of a clean stream of material.

Retail store staff will be required to check the collection bins on a regular basis and remove the film collected to ensure customers always have room to deposit the acceptable film they are returning for recycling. It is advised to line the transparent bin with a transparent plastic

collection bag. This will provide staff with an easy way to tie the bag remove it from the bin and move the collected material to the storage area ready for pick-up.

Consumer Outreach Materials:

A toolkit consisting of a full complement of public education and outreach materials along with information for staff will be available for download and use by all participating retail locations.

The toolkit consists of, but not limited to, the following:

- Website landing page outlining program information
- Collection Bin & Info. Signage
- Point of Purchase and Point of Sale materials
- Staff information materials
- Social media and ad templates for consumer info on the program

Implementation Timeline:

- The pilot will run from **February 15 – May 15, 2022.**

Reporting

Monitoring/Auditing – Program effectiveness, clean material stream, value of material and best practices will be monitored, and audits of the collected material will be conducted on a regular basis throughout the pilot.

Success Measurements – Success of the program will be measured by determining:

- Increased consumer awareness of recycling film through retail takeback programs.
- Increased amount of scrap film collected for recycling.
- Improved quality of film collected for recycling to support additional end markets.
- Increased retailer satisfaction with the program and acceptance as a compliance pathway for EPR.

Final Report

A final report including the key findings, success measurements and recycling analysis will be produced and shared with retail stakeholders upon completion of the pilot. The report will also provide recommendations for potential changes to the program plan and operational changes to consider as the program moves beyond the pilot phase.